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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 002297

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/22/2018
TAGS: PREL PGOV MOPS PMIL I2
SUBJECT: VP HASHIMI, AMB CROCKER, CG PETRAEUS DISCUSS
IIP-CF RELATIONS IN ANBAR

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a July 18 dinner hosted at his residence for Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus to discuss how to promote better relations between the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) and Coalition Forces (CF) in Anbar Province, IIP Secretary-General and Iraqi Vice President Hashimi, IIP MPs, and IIP Party leaders from Anbar complained about the treatment of the IIP in Anbar by Coalition Forces. IIP concerns included: as yet unprovided information on the CF investigation into the recent bombing of IIP's Fallujah offices following the visit of a CF team; a CF raid on an Anbar police station that had been carried out based on bad information; alleged U.S. interference with an Anbar Provincial Council decision to dismiss the Anbar Chief of Police; and questions as to whether anti-IIP material published by the CF-funded "Voice of Anbar" had been approved by U.S. authorities. General Petraeus assured Hashimi that the U.S. must be seen as providing equal treatment for all political parties. He suggested that a subsequent meeting be hosted by the commanding general of MNF-West MajGen John Kelly to resolve the aforementioned concerns.

¶2. (C) Vice President Hashimi raised the issue of the PIC, saying that given the sensitive situation in Anbar, it would be better if the PIC did not take place until after Provincial elections. General Petraeus said that the U.S. had previously believed the GOI wanted the PIC and noted that having heard Hashimi's objections, the CF will not push for PIC. The Ambassador stressed that the resolution of PIC-related issues regarding local responsibilities for security must be accomplished by the GOI and the local government. The GOI had asked for some "breathing space" to accomplish this. On the impending Parliamentary approval of six Tawafiq-nominated ministers, and with it the return of the Tawafiq Coalition to the government, both Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus stressed the importance of full-time ministers to oversee needed projects. General Petraeus hoped the appointment of a new Communications Minister would speed the completion of the fiber optic network. The Ambassador looked forward to the naming of a Justice Minister to move forward implementation of important legislation passed by the Parliament. End Summary.

¶3. (SBU) Ambassador Crocker was accompanied by PolMil MinCouns Marcie Ries, PolCouns Matt Tueller, Anbar PRT Leader James Soriano, and Fallujah EPRT Leader Philip French; MNF-I Commanding General Petraeus was accompanied by MNF-I DCOS Operations MG Michael Barbero, MNF-I DCOS Plans RDML David Buss, MNF-I CMD GRP CIG Director Col Mike Bell and MNF-I CMD GRP Senior Advisor Sadi Othman. Vice President Hashimi was accompanied by MP and IIP Deputy Party Secretary-General Ayad Saleh Mahdi al-Samara'i, IIP MP Abdulkarim Samarae, IIP MP Omar Abdulsattar, IIP Anbar Party Chief and Anbar Provincial Council Member Dr. Ashour Karbouli, IIP Fallujah Party Chief Zaki Fayadh, Habbaniyah IIP Party Chief Abbas Jasim, Political Adviser Khalil Alazzawe, Security Adviser Fadhil Dulaimy, and Political Adviser Saifaldin Abdul-Rahman.

IIP and CF: Common Strategic Goals

¶ 14. (C) Hashimi thanked the Ambassador and the General for accepting his dinner invitation to informally discuss how to promote friendly relations between the IIP and the CF forces in Anbar Province. He said he wanted IIP-CF relations in Anbar to match those of the excellent IIP-CF relations in Baghdad. Hashimi said he believed the IIP and the Coalition Forces shared four strategic goals in Anbar: (1) the fight against Al Qaeda, (2) the establishment of a strong security environment, (3) reconstruction, and (4) the rebuilding of government institutions. Given the importance of those goals, Hashimi continued, we should not allow small things to get in the way. But misunderstandings seem to have occurred. And it was important that he as IIP leader and Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus as U.S. leaders hear from the people -- people from both sides -- on the ground in Anbar.

¶ 15. (C) General Petraeus replied that he would be happy to arrange a discussion devoted to relations between the IIP and CF in Anbar to be hosted by MajGen Kelly of MNF-W, who had been prevented from attending the dinner due to poor weather. General Petraeus said that his instruction to all division commanders, including in Anbar, was "to be fair, honest and equal in dealing with all political parties." At the end of the day, the Coalition Forces had to be seen as not giving an advantage to one party over another.

¶ 16. (C) IIP Anbar Party Chief Ashour Karbouli then offered a review of IIP-CF cooperation against Al Qaeda in 2006, noting that the presence of IIP's many branches throughout Anbar had enabled them to provide names, places

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and vehicle license plates to Coalition Forces. Moreover, he said, the IIP had been able to change the minds of tribes and turn them against Al Qaeda. General Petraeus said he disagreed with the argument that all tribes came over to the U.S. because of the IIP. For instance Shaykh Abu Reisha came over not because of the IIP, but because members of his tribe were being murdered. The IIP should not take credit for all that the tribal leaders began in 2005. And, in truth, General Petraeus added, there was no love lost between Shaykh Abu Sattar and the IIP -- a fact that he said he knew because he had spoken with Shaykh Sattar. General Petraeus suggested that the discussion focus on issues at hand. The Ambassador added that, as we do, we should heed VP Hashimi's comment that we share common goals.

IIP Concerns in Anbar

¶ 17. (C) IIP Anbar Party Chief Ashour Karbouli said that the high degree of IIP-CF cooperation that existed in Anbar has been weakened by certain incidents. First a police station in Habbaniyah had been raided by persons in civilian clothes accompanied by someone clearly in U.S. naval uniform. The following day, Karbouli had spoken to them and it was established that they had been given bad information. A second incident, Ashour Karbouli continued, involved an Anbar Provincial Council order in June or July 2007 for the removal of the Chief of Police that, he said, the U.S. had prevented from being implemented.

¶ 18. (C) IIP Fallujah Party Chief Zaki Fayadh raised the issue of the bombing of IIP's Fallujah offices last month immediately after the departure of a CF team. Fayadh said he had met with MajGen Kelly last Friday (July 11) for several hours to discuss what had happened. Fayadh said that General Kelly had asked whether the U.S. was being accused of blowing up the offices and Fayadh said he had replied "no," but that there were questions that needed to be asked. Among those questions was when the U.S. would have the results of the investigation into the bombing. Fayadh claimed the U.S. in Anbar was siding with other entities. For instance, some IIP members felt that the newspaper "Voice of Anbar," financed by

the U.S., had been running articles critical of IIP and they wanted to know whether the newspaper editorial board had consulted with the U.S. before publishing such material or whether they had done it on their own.

¶9. (C) General Petraeus said that the Coalition Forces do value their relationship with the IIP in Anbar, but at the same time they must be careful not to play favorites. General Petraeus said that every time the Coalition Forces provide Vice President Hashimi with helicopter transportation, people say the CF supports the IIP. He stated, "I say we support the Vice President and they say he is traveling to meet with the IIP; the truth is that we try to treat everyone equally." General Petraeus said that MajGen Kelly's senior diplomat and anyone else Hashimi might desire would travel to Baghdad -- not out in Anbar where everyone would pay attention -- to discuss the issues and to clear the air. He asked that prior to the meeting the IIP provide a list of the issues to be discussed.

Other Issues: PIC, Tawafuq Return, Provincial Elections

¶10. (C) Vice President Hashimi said the PIC in Anbar was an important issue. General Petraeus said that the CF supports PIC, but only when the Government of Iraq is ready. Hashimi said that the very sensitive situation in Anbar required close coordination with the U.S. on the PIC, which might be better delayed until after the provincial elections. General Petraeus said that the U.S. is not pushing on the PIC for Anbar and that when the PIC would take place would be entirely up to the GOI. Before we had believed the GOI wanted the PIC; now we see you do not want it yet and we promise that we will not push for it. The Ambassador stressed that the resolution of PIC-related issues regarding local responsibilities for security must be accomplished by the GOI and the local government. The GOI had asked for some "breathing space" to accomplish this. Hashimi said that Tawafuq had faith in the transparency of the U.S. and that he valued the strategic relationship with the U.S.

¶11. (C) During a brief discussion of the list of Ministerial nominees scheduled for Council of Representatives action on July 19, General Petraeus said that the appointment of new ministers would mean progress for some currently stalled projects. He assessed that new leadership at the Ministry of Communications was needed to move along the fiber optic network projects that had been stalled. General Petraeus asked about progress on the appointment of a new Minister of Justice. The Ambassador asked whether Dahran Nurreddin, a

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very professional judge, was still under consideration. VP Hashimi said he was still under consideration.

¶12. (C) Ambassador Crocker asked about the status of the Provincial Election Law. Vice President Hashimi said the problem was with the Kurds and Kirkuk. The Kurds want Kirkuk treated as a special case and not included in these elections. The current hang-up has to do with the scope of responsibility of the committee that deals with the Kirkuk election: whether they deal only with the "when" or whether they also deal with the "how." The Tawafuq position, Hashimi said, was that the committee should deal both with the "when" and "how." Hashimi said that what Tawafuq wants is to present one choice -- not two -- for a vote on July 21. There will be discussions on Saturday (July 19) on what such a text will be. Ambassador Crocker said the law needed to go forward to the CoR to decide. MP Samara'i said there was some concern that sending up only one choice would bring legal challenges from the opposition which probably would have some validity. Ambassador Crocker said the Supreme Court could decide after the law had been passed.

CROCKER